

Message Text

SECRET

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70

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00

INR-05 SP-02 PRS-01 DODE-00 /037 W

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P 250148Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4052

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS PRIORITY

COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND PRIORITY

CINCPAC PRIORITY

COMIPAC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SAIGON 3398

LIMDIS

NOFORN

FOLLOWING DANANG TEL SENT 24 MAR ACTION AE SAIGON; INFO DAO SGN
BEING REPEATED TO YOU:

SECRET DANANG 0293

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EMBASSY FOR POL/MIL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, VS

SUBJ: MILITARY SITREP - MARCH 24

1. SUMMARY: THE MILITARY SITUATION IN MR-1 DETERIORATED RAPIDLY
DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD. IN THUA THIEN PROVINCE, ARVN UNITS
ABANDONED THEIR ATTEMPTS TO REOPEN Q.L.-1 IN PHU LOC DISTRICT
ON MARCH 23 AND WERE WITHDRAWING INTO A CLOSER PERIMETER AROUND
HUE. ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 24, THE NVA/VC ATTACKED TAM KY,

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THE CAPITAL OF QUANG TIN PROVINCE; RADIO CONTACT WITH THE

PROVINCE WAS LOST AFTER THE PROVINCE CHIEF REPORTED NVA/VC TANKS ON THE STREETS NEAR PROVINCIAL HEADQUARTERS. NVA/VC ATTACKS OF UNKNOWN SIZE WERE REPORTED NEAR QUANG NGAI CITY. ESTIMATES OF REFUGEES NOW IN DANANG RANGE BETWEEN 400,000 AND 500,000 END SUMMARY.

2. NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS:

IN QUANG TRI (P), TWO RF UNITS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE HAD GROUND CONTACTS WITH NVA/VC FORCES IN HAI LAND (D) ON THE NORTHERN DEFENSE LINE; RESULTS UNKNOWN.

IN THUA THIEN (P), THE MILITARY SITUATION BEGAN DETERIORATING RAPIDLY IN THE LATE MORNING OF MARCH 23 WHEN GVN MARINE AND RANGER UNITS WERE UNABLE TO REGAIN CONTROL OF A SECTION OF HWY 1 IN PHU LOC (D). AT THE SAME TIME, GROUND ATTACKS AND ABF'S INCREASED IN THE VICINITY OF BONG MOUNTAIN. ONE REPORT CONCERNING A GROUND ATTACK ON BONG MOUNTAIN STATED THAT THE NVA/VC INFANTRY WERE SUPPORTED BY AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF TANKS. AT 1800 HOURS, MARCH 23, ARVN ENGRS DESTROYED THE TRUOI BRIDGE, YD 967063 ON HWY 1 IN PHU LOC (D). AT 2300 HOURS, THEY DESTROYED THE PHO TRACH BRIDGE, YD519348, ON HWY 1 IN PHONG DIEN (D). GVN FORCES HAVE WITHDRAWN TO NORTH OF THE TRUOI RIVER AND TO THE BASE OF THE HAI VAN PASS, ABANDONING THE GREATER PORTION OF PHU LOC (D) AND SOUTHEASTERN NAM HOA (D). THE CITY OF HUE AND THE TAN MY BASE TO THE NORTHEAST OF THE CITY WERE SUBJECTED TO SEVERAL HEAVY SHELLINGS OF UNIDENTIFIED TYPE; CASUALTIES HAVE NOT BEEN REPORTED. ONE HEAVILY OVERLOADED COMMERCIAL BOAT TRANSPORTING REFUGEES FROM THUAN AN HARBOR TO DANANG SANK AT AU820100; HOWEVER, A NAVY SHIP RESCUED 45 PERSONS AND MOVED THEM TO DANANG. AS OF 1100 HOURS, MARCH 23, I CORPS G-3 ADVISED THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO CONTROL THE MY CHANH LINE AND WERE REESTABLISHING A DEFENSIVE LINE ON THE SONG BO RIVER.

3. SOUTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS:

IN QUANG NAM (P), NVA/VC CONTINUED TO APPLY PRESSURE IN THE LOWLAND AREAS. MARINE AND TERRITORIAL FORCES WERE SUBJECTED TO LIGHT GROUND ATTACKS, MORTAR ABF'S, AND A FEW 122MM ROCKET SHELLINGS IN ALL THE SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICTS. NONE OF THESE ATTACKS ARE CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT.

IN QUANG TIN (P), ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 24 THE NVA/VC LAUNCHED ATTACKS ON TAM KY, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL. AT 1230
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THE PROVINCE CHIEF REPORTED NVA/VC TANKS ON THE STREETS OF THE PROVINCE HEADQUARTERS AND REQUESTED PERMISSION TO EVACUATE. IN THANG BINH (D), THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY.

IN QUANG NGAI (P), AS 1100 HOURS, MARCH 24, AN INCREASE IN FIGHTING WAS REPORTED IN THE VICINITY OF QUANG NGAI CITY. THE O SONG BRIDGE ON HWY 1 WAS REPORTEDLY DESTROYED AND TRAFFIC IS INTERRUPTED.

3. REFUGEES: REFUGEES CONTINUE TO ARRIVE IN DANANG. LARGE
NUMBERS OF REFUGEES HAVE REPORTEDLY BEGUN TO COME TO DANANG
FROM THE SOUTHERN PROVINCES MR-1; MANY ARE STILL ESCAPING THUA
THIEN BY BOAT IN A SHUTTLE BETWEEN TAN MY AND DANANG. THE TOTAL
IN DANANG IS NOW ESTIMATED AT BETWEEN 400,000 AND 500,000.
FRANCIS
LEHMANN

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